

## **HIS BEATITUDE MEETS WITH HER EXCELLENCY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CYPRUS**

**His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa expressed the appreciation of the Patriarchate of Alexandria to Her Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, Mrs Erato Kozakou Markoulli, and through her to all the diplomatic authorities of the Republic of Cyprus in Africa, for their willing assistance to the general pastoral and missionary effort of the Alexandrian Church, awarding her the distinction of the Cross of St Mark at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nicosia, today, 27th March 2012.**

“Wherever I am on the African continent, with whichever leader of a country or official I have discussions, I speak to them of the national problem of Cyprus and its just solution”, said His Beatitude.

On her behalf Her Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs warmly thanked His Beatitude for his significant contribution in informing the leaders of the African nations about the Cyprus issue.

**The discussion between His Beatitude and Mrs Markoulli** extended to the importance of the Cypriot communities and the significant activities which they have developed in Africa, together with the Greek communities. His Beatitude brought up the example of a Cypriot from Aradipou, Mr Loizos, who lives in Australia and has built in Sierra Leone a factory that manufactures artificial limbs for the victims, especially young children, who lost limbs because of landmines during the last civil war.

“The missionary work that you have undertaken throughout Africa is particularly significant”, stressed the Minister, emphasizing the importance of presenting this multifaceted effort internationally.

His Beatitude and Mrs Markouli both expressed their anxiety regarding the future of the Christian communities in the tormented Middle East.

Regarding Egypt, His Beatitude expressed his certainty on the steady progress and prosperity of the country, and prayed that there would soon be a worthy successor for the late Primate of the Coptic Church, Shenouda III.

In conclusion, they discussed issues regarding the establishment of the Exarchy of the Alexandrian Church in Cyprus, and then followed the ceremony awarding Her Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the medal, in the presence of the Director General of the Ministry, Mr Petros Eftychiou.